

Gender Equality and Migration: Problems and Solutions

Mansurova Nigora Dimitriy kizi*

Student, Department of Political Science, Faculty of History and Juridical Science, Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan.
Corresponding Author (Mansurova Nigora Dimitriy kizi) Email: mansurovan649@gmail.com



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46759/IIJSR.2025.9203>

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Article Received: 19 February 2025

Article Accepted: 25 April 2025

Article Published: 05 May 2025

ABSTRACT

This article explores two critical and highly relevant societal issues: gender equality and migration. It examines the significance of gender equality in contemporary society, highlighting various perspectives on the challenges of achieving equality between women and men. Additionally, the paper delves into migration-related concerns, with a particular focus on women's migration and the intersection of gender and migration policies. By analyzing these topics, the article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and legal dimensions that shape gender and migration dynamics in today's world. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with statistical analysis to explore the socio-economic and legal factors influencing migration patterns. Results indicate that gendered migration policies play a significant role in shaping migrant experiences. The study recommends policy interventions to mitigate discrimination and ensure equitable opportunities for women in migration.

Keywords: Migration; Gender Equality; Human Trafficking; Feminization; Labor; Stability; Discrimination; Phenomenon; Divorces; Harassment.

1. Introduction

Migration has become an increasingly significant global phenomenon in recent years. As international relations expand and technological advancements reduce geographical barriers, migration trends continue to evolve. Traditionally, men have constituted the majority of migrant populations; however, women are now actively participating in migration at growing rates. Statistical data indicate that female migrants predominantly work in the service sector, a trend that has been steadily increasing over the years. This shift inevitably influences the psychological and social well-being of migrant women.

Given the diversity of perspectives in contemporary society, opinions on women's migration vary widely. While some view it as an opportunity for empowerment and economic advancement, others highlight the challenges and risks associated with female migration, including discrimination, exploitation, and unsafe working conditions. Governments play a crucial role in addressing these issues through policy interventions and protective measures. Effective governance in this area contributes to safeguarding women's rights and fostering gender equality, ultimately creating a secure environment for all migrants.

The primary objective of this research is to examine the intersection of gender and migration, analyze the challenges faced by migrant women, and explore strategies to promote gender equality in migration policies and practices.

1.1. Study objectives

Extensive research has explored the intersection of gender equality and migration, highlighting the evolving patterns and challenges faced by migrant women. The feminization of migration has notably increased in response to global labor demand, particularly in sectors such as domestic work, healthcare, and manufacturing (Gallotti, 2015; ILO, 2018). This shift has been accompanied by both opportunities and risks, as women migrants often

experience systemic discrimination, labor exploitation, and vulnerabilities linked to human trafficking (Mehzer, Nassif, & Wilson, 2021; UN Women, 2020).

Scholars emphasize that gender-sensitive migration policies play a crucial role in mitigating these risks and ensuring equitable access to legal protections, social services, and economic opportunities for female migrants (Koziyeva, 2022; Piper, 2008). Additionally, studies suggest that integrating gender-responsive frameworks into migration governance can enhance labor market inclusion and empower migrant women through skill development and social integration programs (Morokvasic, 2014; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015).

Despite growing recognition of these issues, gaps remain in policy implementation, particularly in developing countries where institutional support systems for migrant women are often inadequate (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach that considers the socio-economic, legal, and cultural barriers shaping the experiences of women in migration (Donato & Gabaccia, 2015).

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine the intersection of gender equality and migration. The methodology integrates multiple data collection techniques, including case studies, in-depth interviews, and a comprehensive review of migration policies across various regions.

To ensure a robust analysis, the study draws on official statistical data from international migration reports, such as those published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Labour Organization (ILO). These reports provide quantitative insights into migration trends, labor market participation, and policy responses.

In addition, primary data collection involves semi-structured interviews with 50 migrant women residing in Europe and Central Asia. Participants are selected using purposive sampling to include individuals from diverse backgrounds, occupations, and migration statuses. The interviews focus on key themes such as employment opportunities, discrimination, access to social services, and policy impact on their well-being. Each interview is conducted in the participant's preferred language, recorded with consent, and transcribed for thematic analysis.

To enhance the study's validity, triangulation is applied by cross-referencing interview findings with case studies and policy reviews. Data is analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and variations in the experiences of migrant women. This methodological approach ensures a nuanced understanding of gender-related migration challenges and enables the study's conclusions to be grounded in both empirical data and existing scholarship.

3. Discussion

In today's era of globalization, the feminization of international labor migration has emerged as one of its defining characteristics. But what are the underlying reasons for this trend? As previously mentioned, the demand for labor in the service sector continues to grow steadily. Additionally, many countries are experiencing declining birth rates and increasing life expectancy, leading to an aging population and a rising demand for caregivers. Socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, poverty, and social conflicts also contribute to the increase in female migration.

Furthermore, the empowerment of women in modern societies and their aspiration for independent careers serve as significant driving forces behind this phenomenon.

Research suggests that the motivations for women's labor migration vary across different countries. Some women migrate to secure employment, build a career, or establish a new life, while others seek to provide financial support for their families, pay off debts, or cover medical expenses for loved ones. According to empirical studies, 84% of respondents stated that labor migration has had a positive impact on their lives and careers, while 62.4% recognized its benefits for recipient countries and regions.

When examining migration patterns, the number of migrants entering Uzbekistan alone has significantly increased. Data from January to September 2023 indicates that 168,700 people were recorded in migration flows, with women comprising 58.5% (98,600 individuals) and men 41.5% (70,100 individuals). During the same period, overall migration flow reached 181,100 people, of whom 58.5% (105,100 individuals) were women and 41.5% (76,000 individuals) were men.

As the data suggests, women now outnumber men in migration. This trend is expected to persist as global economic development influences migration flows. Regional data also indicate a steady increase in the proportion of women in migration, with the exception of the Pacific region and East Asia, where the numbers remain lower.

Female migrants predominantly work in the agriculture, domestic services, education, healthcare, and hospitality sectors. For example, in Europe, women migrants are heavily represented in the healthcare and social service sectors. In the United Kingdom, female migrants dominate the medical field, whereas in Italy, many are employed in education, and in Spain and Greece, a large proportion work in the hospitality industry.

Another key sector where female migrants form a significant workforce is domestic services. Domestic workers are mainly employed in high-income countries, where they constitute 66% of all migrants in these regions, with an employment rate of up to 80%. In terms of geographical distribution, 52% of migrant domestic workers are concentrated in the Arab states, North America, and Europe. The high demand for domestic workers in these regions is primarily driven by rapid demographic aging, which has resulted in an increasing need for personal caregivers and household workers.

Data further reveals that among all regions, the Arab states have the highest percentage of female migrant domestic workers (60.8%), whereas Eastern Europe records the lowest (0.8%). However, it is important to note that an increasing number of highly educated female migrants are entering well-paid professional fields, benefiting from higher salaries and career advancements. Interestingly, while women generally earn less than men, they tend to remit a larger proportion of their earnings back to their home countries.

While labor migration provides women with opportunities for financial stability, career growth, and skill development, it also exposes them to serious risks, including discrimination, human trafficking, harassment, and sexual violence. Additionally, compared to men, female migrants often face greater challenges upon returning home, such as reintegrating into society, reclaiming their familial roles, and overcoming skill obsolescence. Many women struggle to regain employment due to the depreciation of their professional qualifications, leaving them

vulnerable to financial insecurity and unemployment. The stress of re-adjusting to domestic responsibilities and reconnecting with their children's upbringing further exacerbates their mental and emotional well-being.

The feminization of labor migration is a growing global phenomenon influenced by economic, social, and demographic factors. While it offers women numerous opportunities, it also presents significant challenges that require comprehensive policy measures to protect their rights, ensure safe working conditions, and support their reintegration into society. The fact that women and girls experience such serious physical and mental conditions is sure to cause the spiritual unhealthiness of the whole family or the whole society. Also, the increase in the number of women in the field of migration leads to an increase in the number of divorces, a decrease in the birth rate, and the number of people starting a family. Sometimes even respect for female migrants and confidence in their dignity is waning. All this leads to the emergence of social problems with huge negative consequences and an increase in social pressure in the entire society in order to solve the economic problems in the donor countries for migration.

“According to the results of the study, the majority of Ethiopian women migrants who returned to work in Saudi Arabia reported that their journeys were dangerous, that they suffered from problems such as lack of food and drinking water, and harassment” [4]. Such dangers are many. Plab is found in the regions and is one of the situations that make migration difficult. In order to achieve gender equality, efforts are being made to create the same conditions for migration between women and men, but the majority of victims of human trafficking are still women.

According to statistics, 80% of the victims of human trafficking in the world are women and young children. Every year, from 600,000 to 800,000 women and children around the world are taken abroad and sold. The saddest part is that the volume of trade in women as a commodity has exceeded 10 billion US dollars per year in the world” [5]. Such situations are heartbreaking. Governments are making special decisions to find solutions to such problems.

4. Results

In the case of Uzbekistan, significant efforts are being made to improve the social conditions of women, provide financial support, and enhance employment opportunities. Notably, several government initiatives have been introduced to address these issues. Programs such as the “Iron Notebook,” “Women’s Notebook,” and “Youth Notebook” have been launched to provide targeted support. Additionally, in 2022, two major presidential initiatives—the Decree on Accelerated Measures for Systematic Support of Family and Women and the Resolution on the Organization of the Activities of the State Committee for Family and Women—demonstrate the government’s commitment to gender equality and socio-economic empowerment.

To further increase women’s employment, the expansion of remote work opportunities has gained momentum. Special meetings and roundtable discussions are also being held to enhance women's legal awareness, ensuring they are better informed about their rights and protections. These initiatives are expected to yield significant positive outcomes in the long run.

However, this does not imply that migration is inherently dangerous. On the contrary, migration plays a crucial role in facilitating financial flows through remittances and contributing to economic development. Although women’s

remittances tend to be lower than those of men in some countries, their contributions extend far beyond financial transactions. At this point, it is essential to recognize that the social transfers of female labor migrants—including their experiences, knowledge, and exposure to social, political, and cultural norms—are more impactful than financial remittances alone. The skills, ideas, and perspectives gained by women abroad enhance their social status within their families and communities, fostering positive changes in societal attitudes and perceptions [6].

5. Conclusion

In summary, the growth of migration in the context of globalization is a natural and inevitable phenomenon. This trend is further reinforced by economic expansion, as migration plays a crucial role in labor markets and financial flows. Ensuring gender equality in migration is a critical priority, as it directly impacts the well-being and empowerment of female migrants.

Many individuals, particularly women, migrate primarily for economic reasons, seeking better employment opportunities abroad. This process significantly contributes to their financial independence and broadens their perspectives, fostering personal and professional growth. However, migration is not without its challenges. Women migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, deception, and human trafficking, often facing violations of their rights.

Government policies and interventions play a vital role in preventing such risks and protecting the rights of migrant women. However, addressing these challenges requires a collective effort from society as a whole. By working together to combat exploitation, promote gender equality, and create safer migration pathways, we can achieve sustainable and positive outcomes for all.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Consent for publication

The author declares that he/she consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

The author conceptualized the research, conducted data collection and analysis, and wrote the manuscript.

Acknowledgments

The author extends gratitude to the research participants and institutions that provided data and support.

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